

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the following paragraphs as shown below:

[0076] ~~FIG. 14 depicts oligonucleotides used for specific PCR hybridization.~~

[0217] The recognition of nucleic acid sequences encoding only seHAS, only spHAS, or both seHAS and spHAS using specific oligonucleotides is shown in FIG. 13. Three pairs of sense-antisense oligonucleotides were designed based on the sequence of ID SEQ NO. 1 and the coding sequence for spHAS. The ~~seHAS-based nucleic acid segments (se1-se2 and sesp1-se2)~~ are indicated ~~in FIG. 14.~~ These three oligonucleotide pairs were hybridized under typical PCR reactions with genomic DNA from either Group C (seHAS) (lanes 2, 4, and 6) or Group A (spHAS) (lanes 3,5, and 7) streptococci. Lanes 1 and 8 indicate the positions of MW standards in kb (kilobases). The PCR reactions were performed using *Taq* DNA polymerase (from Promega) for 25 cycles as follows: 94 degrees Celsius for 1 minute to achieve DNA denaturation, 48 degrees Celsius (42 degrees Celsius for the smaller common sesp primers) for 1 minute to allow hybridization, and 72 degrees Celsius for 1.5 minutes for DNA synthesis. The PCR reaction mixtures were then separated by electrophoresis on a 1% agarose gel.

[0219] ~~The oligonucleotides used for specific PCR or hybridization are shown in FIG. 14.~~ The synthetic oligonucleotides of SEQ ID NOS: 3, 4, 5, and 6 are indicated in the corresponding regions of SEQ ID NO. 1. These regions

are in bold face and marked, respectively as primers se1, se2, sesp1, and sesp2. The #1 indicates primers in the sense direction, while the #2 indicates a primer in the antisense direction. Each of the four oligonucleotides will hybridize specifically with the seHAS sequence and the appropriate pairs of sense/antisense primers are suitable for use in the polymerase chain reaction as shown in FIG. 13.